MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN OFFICE OF MCKIM, MEAD AND WHITE, 101 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY,
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1920.

A Committee meeting of the members of the Commission of Fine Arts was held in the office of McKim, Mead and White, 101 Park Avenue, New York City, September 20, 1920.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Platt;
Mr. Pope;
Mr. Greenleaf;
Mr. Fraser;

also Major C. S. Ridley, Secretary and Executive Officer, and Major C. C. Pierce, Chief of the Graves Registration Service, office of the Quartermaster General, War Department, Washington, D. C.

The meeting was called pursuant to a notice from the War Department that the Secretary of War desires the cooperation and advice of the Commission of Fine Arts in arranging for the establishment of four proposed American National Cemeteries in France. These are to be at Suresnes, in the immediate vicinity of Paris, Belleau Wood, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, and at Bony (Department of the Aisne).

Major Pierce advised that originally there were 2,400 burial places which have now been reduced to 600, and these are to be further reduced to the four National Cemeteries proposed; that of the remains of approximately 80,000 American soldiers buried there two-thirds will be returned to the United States, leaving approximately 27,000 always to remain in these four proposed American Cemeteries in France. It is, therefore, desired that they be laid out and made beautiful according to well devised plans and before proceeding further in the work the War Department desires the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts in the matter. Major Pierce advised that the Secretary of War desires members of

the Commission of Fine Arts to visit the sites proposed for these cemeteries and upon returning make definite recommendations as to the action to be taken for their development.

Major Ridley advised that he had told Major Pierce that the Commission would want a topographical map on certain scale and contour of adequate size, and one of the things to be decided was what kind of maps the Commission would want. Major Pierce thought it might be possible to obtain such a map from the French Ministry of War but Mr. Platt thought it was doubtful if such a contour map existed. Major Pierce called attention to the blueprints recently submitted to the Commission showing existing conditions at Suresnes, Romagne and Belleau Wood. The Commission examined these blueprints but found them satisfactory only in part.

Mr. Greenleaf thought it would be very desirable to have a new map drawn for each of these American Cemeteries in France giving detailed information which would be needed in making a plan. Major Pierce said he would be glad to send a cablegram to the Commanding Officer in France asking that proper persons be designated for the work. A discussion followed as to the degrees of measurement to be adopted. Mr. Greenleaf, as the landscape architect of the Commission, was asked to advise as to the data which should be shown on these maps in the making of a proper landscape design. Mr. Greenleaf advised that the maps should show trees, buildings, roads, rock outcrops, streams, ditches, and other rare features that assist in placing ones self. Major Ridley suggested that they show fences and boundary lines, and Mr. Pope said the maps should show special drainage conditions. The Committee directed that the following be made the basis of a cablegram to the authorities in France concerning these maps:

In order to make a preliminary study of American cemeteries in France

the Commission of Fine Arts will require a topographical map of each cemetery.

Such map should be on a scale of five meters or thereabouts to the inch for smaller cemeteries and twenty meters or thereabouts to the inch for larger cemeteries.

Maps should show area already owned and also area proposed to be acquired, together with such outlying areas as will aid to understanding of immediate surroundings.

Maps should show contours at one meter intervals or two foot intervals whichever is most convenient to surveyor.

In case of sink holes and mounds give elevation and position of lowest or highest points.

Maps should show trees individual or groups also outlines of forests, also buildings temporary or permanent; also roads, paths, streams, ditches, culverts, wells, rock outcrops and bowlders, fences or other boundary lines, and any other topographical features.

Note north and south line.

Note special drainage conditions.

Send six black prints of each map.

Major Pierce advised that laying out a cemetery in France is a solemn matter; that the French Government has stringent regulations which must be adhered to, for example, no building is permitted to be within one-hundred meters of a cemetery.

As for their maintenance Major Pierce said that Congress has appropriated thirty million dollars to care for the remains of our soldiers in France, and he felt certain Congress would appropriate further sums for this cause if it was found necessary. At the present time Major Pierce said the American Field of Honor Association is trying to secure authority to take charge of these ceme-

teries in France but that the War Department desires that they be maintained as strictly American Cemeteries similar to the American National Cemeteries in this country. The land he said has been given by the French Government to the United States in perpetuity. As for additional ground that might be needed for these proposed cemeteries Major Pierce said that many small tracts would be given back to France in view of the work of concentration of the remains now going on in them in view of which he thought the French Government would be willing to cede to the United States such additional space as would be needed for the four proposed National Cemeteries, and that this matter ought, therefore, not to cause much trouble.

Major Pierce called attention to the complaints made as to the segregation of officers from the privates at Suresnes. He said there was no intention to do anything which might diminish honor from privates and that this came about in a purely accidental way at the time organizations such as the Y. M. C. A., the Red Cross and the Knights of Columbus asked for separate space at Suresnes as a ready aid to identification of those of their organizations buried there, and it was thus that one place was set aside for American officers. The British, he said, make no mark of distinction between officers and privates and under a recent order approved by the Secretary of the War Memorial Council the headstone, designed by Charles A. Platt of this Commission, will be used for all graves of American soldiers in the World War who are buried abroad or in this country. Mr. Pope suggested it would be very desirable to visit cemeteries of the Allied countries which would undoubtedly aid in developing the American Cemeteries, and it was also thought desirable to confer with British and French officials in this matter.

As for placing National monuments in the cemeteries by divisions, regiments, or civic organizations, to commemorate battles, etc., the Committee thought

the landscape design should show places for them. Mr. Moore read an extract from the Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts of January 23, 1920 (Exhibit A) advising that the Woodmen of the World are interested in the erection of a monument in the American Cemeteries in France in behalf of their organization. Mr. Fraser called attention to the importance of having the preparation of the designs and models placed under strict censorship, so that no monument is sent over seas which has not had the approval of this Government and which might meet with objection on the part of the French Government. The Committee thought the Commission of Fine Arts should have ultimate jurisdiction in this matter.

Major Pierce advised that the Secretary of War would be pleased to hear definitely whether any members of the Commission would be willing to visit the grounds in France saying that their expenses would be met by the War Department, but it would probably be necessary to go across in an Army transport. The Committee thought such a trip would be necessary in reaching the right conclusion with regard to the plans but the War Department should give assurance that the Commission of Fine Arts would be given such authority as would make any schemes of private organizations or individuals subordinate, so that there will be no complications in the making of the final plans. Mr. Moore, Mr. ~~Platt~~ Pope and Mr. Greenleaf, expressed their willingness to go. The Committee requested, however, that the maps according to the suggestions heretofore indicated be made at once and submitted to the Commission, and that if possible the trip be deferred until some time next spring as weather conditions would be more suitable and it would also allow time for the consideration of further suggestions concerning the plans.

Major Pierce was officially advised of the action of the Committee. (Exhibit B).

The Committee, including Mr. ~~Charles Grafly~~ Henry M. Shrady, sculptor of the Grant Memorial, were the guests of Mr. Moore for luncheon at the Century Club. In the afternoon the Committee visited the Roman Bronze Works, 275 Green Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., to inspect Mr. ~~Grafly's~~ Shrady's equestrian statue of General Grant which is now complete. This statue in bronze will form the central motif of the Grant Memorial which will be at the foot of the Capitol in the Botanic Garden area. The Committee expressed itself highly pleased with the statue. It typifies Grant as an expert horseman and General, seated on a large horse sixteen feet high, and weighing 10,700 pounds. Mr. ~~Grafly~~ Shrady said he selected the type of this horse out of three hundred, and that he was continually in conference with Army officials in the making of the statue so as to have it as perfect as possible. The final examination of the statue is to be made in Washington and Major Ridley suggested to Mr. ~~Grafly~~ Shrady that if he thought the statue was mechanically correct he should make arrangements to have it sent to Washington.

Approved:

EXTRACT FROM
MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 1920.

Mr. Elisha Betts Lewis, of Kinston, North Carolina, Auditor for the Woodmen of the World, a fraternal organization numbering nearly a million members, appeared before the Commission in behalf of a proposition to erect a suitable war memorial in one of the American Cemeteries in France. Mr. Lewis said he had been referred to the Commission of Fine Arts by Colonel C. C. Pierce, Chief of the Graves Registration Service, office of the Quartermaster General. Mr. Moore reported that he had just heard from Colonel Pierce advising that the Quartermaster General's office had submitted a recommendation to the Secretary of War for the purchase of five hundred or six hundred acres for one large American Cemetery in France, such cemetery to be sub-divided so that one section may be used for the burial of the men who were slain in the Battle of the Argonne, of Belleau-Woods, etc; that there should be roads, walks, and places for suitable memorials; the design for this large National Cemetery to be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts. The American Cemetery at Suresnes is to remain intact.

It was Colonel Pierce's suggestion that no organization be given authority to erect a memorial in the American Cemeteries in France until action had been taken by the Secretary of War upon the recommendation above mentioned submitted to him. The Commission of Fine Arts concurred in this, and suggested to Mr. Lewis that in the meantime he may, if he thought it desirable, secure funds for the erection of the proposed war memorial but to leave the question of selecting a design until such time as it could be definitely determined just where it will be located.

EXHIBIT A

September 23, 1920.

Dear Major Pierce:

As arranged with you at the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held in New York City September 20th I give below the details to be shown on maps to be furnished to the Commission by the War Department:

In order to make a preliminary study of American Cemeteries in France the Commission of Fine Arts will require a topographical map of each cemetery.

Such map should be on a scale of five meters or thereabouts to the inch for smaller cemeteries and twenty meters or thereabouts to the inch for larger cemeteries. This will provide a good size for working, being about double the size of the topographic map of Romagne, which is taken as a basis for these suggestions.

Maps should show area already owned and also area proposed to be acquired, together with such outlying areas as will aid to understanding of immediate surroundings.

Maps should show contours at one meter intervals or two foot intervals, whichever is most convenient to surveyor.

In case of sink holes and mounds give elevation and position of lowest or highest points.

Maps should show trees, individual or groups, also outlines of forests, also buildings temporary or permanent; also roads, paths, streams, ditches, culverts, wells, rock outcrops and bowlders, fences or other boundary lines, and any other topographical features.

Note north and south line.

Note special drainage conditions.

Send six black prints of each map.

With regard to the request that members of the Commission of Fine Arts

visit France, the matter will be discussed with you personally. The members of the Commission are deeply concerned in this matter. They will make business and personal sacrifices to assist in the development of the cemeteries in such manner as will make them equal to the best foreign cemeteries, provided they can work in full cooperation with the War Department.

Furthermore the Commission of Fine Arts suggest the issuance of an order by the War Department requiring that any organization which desires to erect a monument in France shall first obtain permission from the Secretary of War and shall submit the design and model to the Commission of Fine Arts for approval. The Commission received information in January, 1920, from an organization in America, numbering about a million members, asking for advice as to a monument to be erected in France but pending a definite decision as to the ultimate arrangement which would be made in such cases the Commission suggested that they withhold further action with the exception of the raising of the funds. The Commission feel certain that this will avoid unfortunate complications.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Major C. C. Pierce,
Chief, Graves Registration Service,
Office of Quartermaster General,
War Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B.